

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting

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So let's start with a political update. Ohio released its plan to comply with the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The document touts the 10 regional stakeholder meetings that were held last year and I remember Charlie and I attending one of the first. My impression at that time was that ODE would not be able to synthesize anything from these meetings into a coherent plan and that the best that could be accomplished was to get a sense of the enormous frustration that the education community had with both ODE and the legislature. What ODE published was a draft of an overview. The full plan will come out next week and that will commence a two month comment period which ends on April 3. Here are the big themes from the report.

First, Ohio isn't going to get rid of its "more rigorous" standards. They are, in fact, being tweaked even now with ongoing comment periods. ODE got a very loud message that the state assessment system needed to be stabilized and to resist changing anything for "several years" but also to cut down on the number tests. The overview commits that ODE will look at the testing requirements without committing to changing anything. The overview did say that Ohio will not adapt a process for using the SAT or ACT as substitute exams for high school. The overview hints that ODE is going to look at the report card to make them "more user-friendly and understandable". According to ODE, stakeholders were split on whether Ohio should have a single grade (A-F) for school districts and arguably, ESSA requires the single letter grade. Finally, ODE is looking at using chronic absenteeism and student discipline incidents as a measure of student engagement and including that data on the report card. There is lots of other data in the overview and again, the full proposal will be out in a few weeks. As with all statewide issues of import, Worthington's voice should be heard, although I'll mention that how important ESSA turns out to be is up in the air as the incoming administration at the federal level has already frozen new regulations, including ESSA, until they can be evaluated and that the status of the confirmation of the Secretary-Designee of Education is itself up in the air.

Some other items of note since our last get-together. Along with the rest of the Board, I attended the screening of "Most likely to succeed", so thank you to the Ed Foundation for sponsoring the event. I don't want to put anyone on the spot by soliciting feedback about the movie, but I'll share some preliminary thoughts. First, our district already provides a wealth of project based and experiential learning opportunities at the secondary level, including STEM and the opportunity for integration of those classes is also present to some degree with Project Lead the Way. The film talked a little bit about internships which I've always felt are a very valuable capstone to the high school education, but we offer those as well, particularly with the Linworth Walkabout experience at the WKHS senior exploration option. The film highlighted a grading methodology that was performance-based rather than test-based which we might consider as part of our overall grading conversation started by Mr. Gupta last year. In short, and speaking just for me, I came away from the movie feeling pretty good about the things we are already doing and I

encourage additional innovation as we broaden our understanding of the changing role of education and the nature of employment in the next 10 or 20 years.

We all received our “Quality Profile” in the mail today and I did have to comment on what a nice job administration did with this document. The purpose of the Quality Profile is to inform the community about some factoids that they may not know about our district and I absolutely love the fact that we highlighted academic rigor, our diversity of programming and the fact that we truly strive to make kids “College and Career Ready” at the end of the process. I also like that we shared the fact that “The district’s financial picture is as good as it’s been any time in the last century”, a bullet point I might steal at some point. I do have to wonder how our community will feel when we starting talking about a needed PI Levy, Bond Issue and Operating Levy, all within the next 2-3 years.

Finally, I attended the TWHS-WKHS basketball game a week or so ago and was treated to some last second drama as Kilbourne pulled out the win with a buzzer beater that completed a huge comeback. Kudos to both teams for the effort as well as all the kids and administrators that came out to support both teams.